THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE GELLAPPER SHEEP BREED
AT GELLAP-OST RESEARCH STATION

INTRODUCTION

Given the Namibian environment, a need was identified to develop a sheep breed which can survive and produce well under the harsh conditions of southern Namibia. Over a period of 14 years (1989 to 2002) the Damara and Dorper sheep breeds were used as parent breeds in the development of a new sheep breed, called the Gellapper, at Gellap-Ost Research Station. The production data for this breed has been recorded since 1998.

The initial cross consisted of 45 Dorper ewes and a Damara ram obtained from Kalahari Research Station. The offspring were backcrossed with a Damara ram up to the F4 generation. The F4 ewes were then mated with the Dorper ram for the offspring to inherit traits such as musculinity, growth rate and good carcass quality, while retaining the Damara traits such as hardiness, flock instinct and walking abilities.

This new breed was then evaluated with the Dorper and Damara breeds under the same environmental and management conditions at Gellap-Ost Research Station.
The new breed has been found to possess the following characteristics: hardiness, straight thin motile tail, a comfortable gait, relatively strong flock instinct, low maintenance, good mothering ability and high fertility rate.

Management

With the aim of developing a Meatmaster breed which is disease tolerant and resistant, no veterinary preparations (medicines, vaccines and drenching/dosing agents) were used for these animals. During the development period, only a few disease problems were noticed. The principle of survival of the fittest was applied.

RESULTS

The following crosses were made during the development of the Gellapper breed:

CONCLUSION

The new breed has been stabilized and is seen to consist of 70 % Damara and 30 % Dorper blood.

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